

John Dickinson Feed Barn (Reconstruction)
Kitts Hummock Road
Dover Vicinity
Kent County
Delaware

HABS No. DE-17-A

HABS
DEL,
1-DOV.Y,
1-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HABS
DEL,
1-DDV.V,
1-A-

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Delaware	COUNTY Kent	TOWN OR VICINITY Dover Vicinity
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) John Dickinson Feed Barn (Reconstruction) (Delaware Bureau of Museums)		HABS NO. DE-17-A
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) Kitts Hummock Road UTM Coordinates 18.461265.4327921 USGS Quadrangle Frederica		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1985 based on ca. 1800 specifications		ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Dean Nelson, William Macintire
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The Dickinson Feed Barn is a reconstructed agricultural building erected as part of the De. Bureau of Museums' Dickinson Plantation Project. The design of the building and its construction are based on fieldwork and documentary sources.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Four bent (three bay), common rafter roof, post-and-rail walling, arch bracing. Joined frame (oak, vertical mill sawn).		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Rectangular, three bay with shed. See attached plan and sections		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE The completed barn will be clad with riven clapboard or possibly taper sawn horizontal siding, roofing to be 3' by 9" double lapped riven shingle. Paralleling documentary evidence, the building is supported on timber (walnut) blocks set directly on the ground.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) See attached information.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Frame raised 1985, based on comparative above-ground information, archaeologically defined features, and period documentation.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Reconstruction; excellent		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE The barn is archaeologically-sited over excavated pair of earthwalled vegetable storage pits requiring a hatch in the flooring. For full information consult John Dickinson Plantation Project documentation.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Delaware Bureau of Museums, John Dickinson Plantation Project Documentation, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Dover, De.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Bernard Herman, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware		DATE 4/1/1986

THE DICKINSON PLANTATION PROJECT

By Dr. John Kern, Director, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

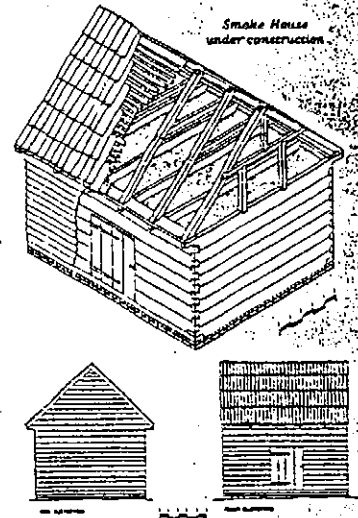
"In anticipation of the State's Bicentennial celebration of its ratification and signing of the Constitution in 1787, in which John Dickinson played a major role as one of this country's founding fathers, the sum of one hundred sixty thousand dollars appropriated for the Department of State shall be used for the continued restoration of the John Dickinson Mansion. Funds made available for this project may be used for reconstructing certain outbuildings, providing improved landscaping, adding new public amenities and further enhancing the surrounding area in order to help make this site a major tourist and historical attraction for future generations."

On June 30, 1984, the General Assembly of the State of Delaware enacted a bond bill entitled the "St. Jones Bicentennial." This legislative authorization for the Dickinson Plantation Project is doubly appropriate because it recognizes John Dickinson's central role in establishing America's political independence and because it provides the State with the opportunity to focus on Dickinson's great and abiding interest in the supervision of agricultural life on St. Jones Neck.

John Dickinson's reputation as "Penman of the Revolution" has been well supported by a century of literary and historical research. Three generations of nationally recognized American scholars have attested to Dickinson's preeminence as an essayist, a federalist and one of America's principal founding fathers. Scholars who have spent more time with Dickinson's personal papers have also been compelled to comment upon the wide ranging concern for agricultural life and for the management of his family's estate on St. Jones Neck which pervaded so much of his correspondence. The Dickinson Plantation Project provides an important opportunity to commemorate Dickinson's political leadership which culminated in Delaware's first state ratification of the Constitution. At the same time the project offers challenges in drawing upon extensive architectural and archeological research so that we can reconstruct appropriate St. Jones Neck plantation outbuildings and interpret them in a manner which will enable the public to gain some understanding of agricultural life as it was lived there under John Dickinson's attentive direction on the eve of American nationhood. Our task of commemoration, research, reconstruction and interpretation are appropriate and significant. Completed successfully, the Dickinson Plantation Project will give Delaware a unique and lasting memorial of her late eighteenth-century political and agricultural heritage.

Archival research gives us a picture of John Dickinson as a man who spent much of his life writing about the family estate on St. Jones Neck, even though he only lived there without interruption from 1740 when the Mansion was completed until 1750 when he left Kent County at the age of eighteen to study law, first in Philadelphia and then in London. Perhaps it was because he was gone so frequently from the land he cared for so much that Dickinson felt compelled to produce the correspondence which gives us such detailed, if fragmentary, information concerning the family plantation.

Dickinson Plantation architectural research has drawn upon a combination of references to architectural specifications in Dickinson's papers and upon a photographic and measured drawing survey of early nineteenth-century farm buildings in Delaware which are still standing. The Dickinson Plantation Project also depends on historical archeological research for accurate location of the late eighteenth-century outbuildings to be reconstructed, because no major agricultural structures were left standing by the time the Mansion opened as a Museum site in the 1950's and because no circa 1800 outbuildings at the plantation appear to have survived to the era of photography. In the absence of above surface structural remains and with no visual record of Dickinson-era farm building placement, the project was obligated to undertake subsurface investigation for cultural features. Historical archeological field work was carried out from June through October of last year to locate late eighteenth-century outbuildings, refuse disposal sites and distinctive farm activity areas. The historical archeological evidence already recovered during that time promises to help in preparing an accurate interpretation of Dickinson Plantation farm life.



Our Dickinson Project development plan has already relocated the parking lot to an area 600 feet north of the Mansion and calls for construction near the parking lot of a braced frame barn for visitor orientation. The farmyard will include two sawn plank double corncribs combined with stables. A braced frame interpretive feed barn will be located in the Mansion's east yard. A sawn plank smoke house, whose construction has been funded by the Daughters of American Colonists, is now underway near the kitchen wing. A log stable will be located on its original site pinpointed by archeological excavation. The cider press will be reconstructed at its excavated site in the east yard. Erection of a well house, granary, a log tenant dwelling and fences will complete the three-year construction plan.

The Mansion itself will, of course, always retain its identity as the focal point of the Dickinson Plantation Project. It will remain open for visitation at regular hours throughout the duration of construction. When the process of research, reconstruction and interpretation is complete, the Mansion and its outbuildings will stand as a living testimonial to Delaware's first-state ratification of the Constitution, to John Dickinson's leadership in that cause, and to his love of life at the St. Jones Neck plantation.

FEED BARN ARCHIVAL EVIDENCE
(Specific references to barns at the Dickinson Mansion)

"A Barn of Frame fifty feet long, and twenty-five feet wide - one story"

J. Dickinson Real Estate Inventory,
January 4, 1799

"Sheds projecting from the Ends of both Barns to the Southward"

1786; File 2/1 Box 9, folder 7 HSP-DP

"For the Barn near the Corn cribs -- all wanting there, are 500 Clapboards
The Sill to the West to be repaired by a new splice opposite to the Door"

undated; File 6/11/B

"I, William Garner, of Kent County, carpenter, hereby agree with John Dickinson of Wilmington that I make the following repairs to his barn on his plantation now in the tenure of Charles Ryan near to the branch in the most substantial and workmanlike manner, that is, I will put new sills of the best white oak at least ten inches by twelve inches square, under the whole sides and the whole end for which said John Dickinson allows 4 white oaks to put new sleepers twenty-two in number from end to end to be sawed by me, to put new braces wherever wanted, to be sawed by me. The sleepers and braces to be of yellow poplar, to put new studs wherever wanted, to pull off the old and put on new weatherboarding all round and at the ends to the ridge of the roof. I am to get the boards, for which I am to be allowed by the said John Dickinson three black oaks in his woods. I am also to get the braces and keepers out of the two poplars now down and allowed to me. The braces are lots 3 by 9 and the sleepers 3 by 9. I am to put a new floor flush from end to end of two inch yellow poplar plank which I myself at my expense am to find and supply from those I now have well seasoned and the honest lading and I am also out of the same to make two new folding doors. I will take from the old floor so as not to injure the sleepers or planks for other uses. I will raise the whole barn at least one foot from the ground and fix in the best manner under the sills twenty four suitable blocks of black walnut now lying on the ground in the woods and cleared field. The yellow poplar before mentioned for the floor and doors I hereby promise immediately to deliver on the plantation aforesaid and to complete the repairs of the said barn as they ought to be done on or before the first day of next July, for which materials to be found by me as aforesaid and for my work I am to be paid in the following month of August in one sum Sixty pounds. The said John Dickinson hereby agrees to pay on demand. Witness my hand the fourteenth day of April 11th, 1798. The new floor is to be put underneath with pine boards which I am allowed to take out of those logs which the said John Dickinson has lately purchased from the Laffertys.

William Garner"

Dickinson-Garner contract, 1798;
file 18/5

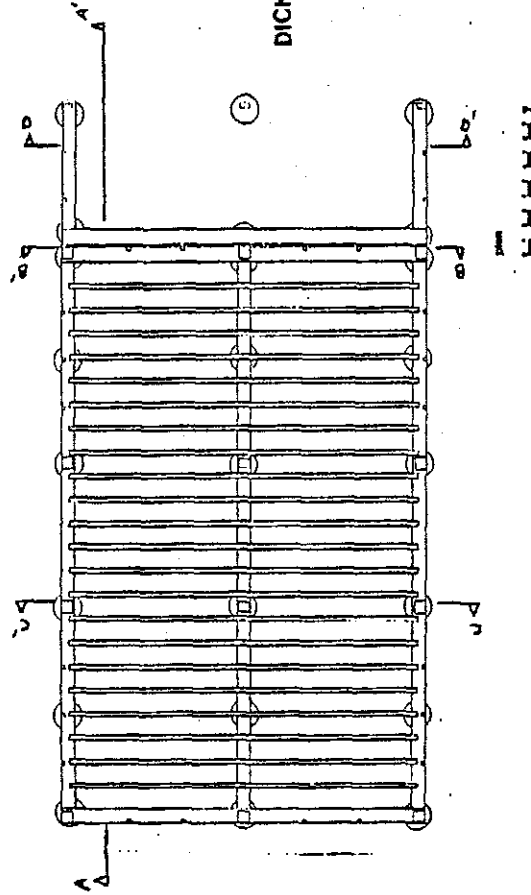
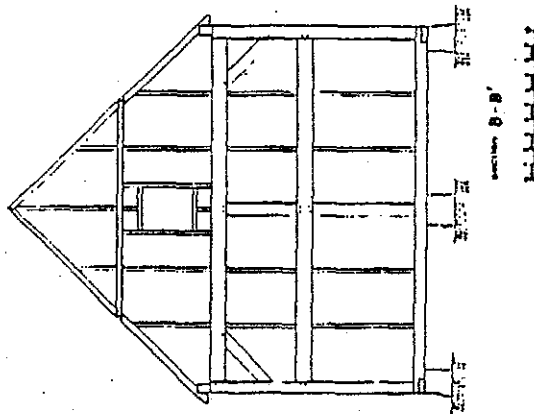
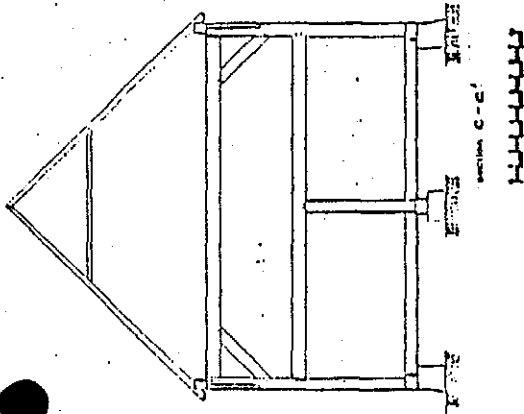
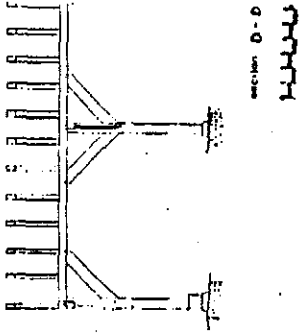
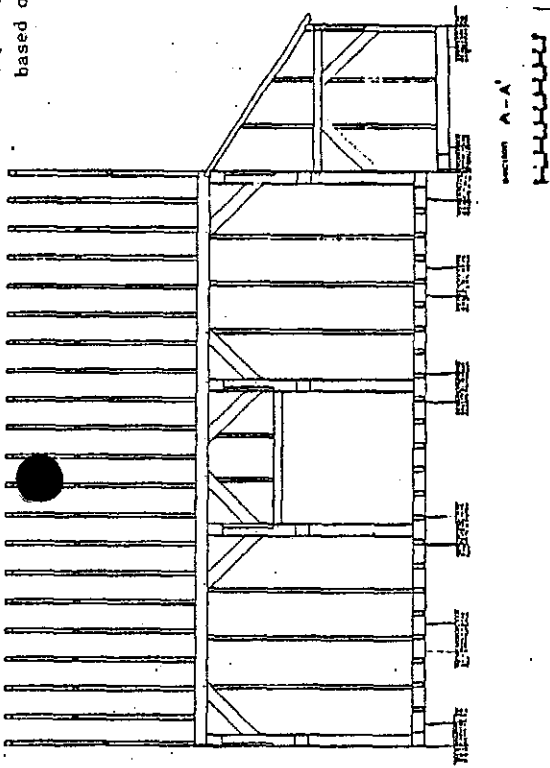
"William Garner broke his agreement and did great damages to my barn and then totally and finally abandoned the repairs and left it in imminent danger of falling so that I was obliged to employ James Thorton to complete the work and to pay him afterwards of thirty pounds for the repairs he made on the barn as by his receipt will appear."

Dickinson Note, undated; file 18/5

Barn at Homestead	
"To giting 400 hundred oak clabbonds at 9s?? P hud.	1.16.0
To weatherbording 12 squar with oak clabbords	4.10.0
To puting in Log three Long braces and studs whenever wanted	0.7?.6
[Crossed out in original] 8/- the each	
To framing in sleepers 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ square at 6/1 p squar	3.15.0
To Laying 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ square of flooring with too inch popler plank strept under with? +pind down with inch white oak pins only on the sills + then with spiiks at 18/9 p square	11.14.4 22. 2.10
To makeing + hanging too set of folding doors at	1.10.0 23.12.10"

James Thornton Bill, 1799, file 19#15

based on: 1) Davies Barn, Little Creek, F.
2) Kitts Hummock Barn, 8000 Long
Neck, Del.
3) "Retirement" Barn, vic. St.
Georges, Del.



DICKINSON PLANTATION PRO.
FEED BARN